

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----021259 121454Z /41

O R 121241Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6090
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 1979

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK
SUBJ: NKOMO SEEKS TO CLARIFY PATRIOTIC FRONT STAND ON
ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE

REF: LUSAKA 1961 (NOTAL), STATE 160853 (NOTAL),
PRETORIA 3345 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN MEETING WITH CHARGE AND EMBOFF JULY 12, NKOMO SOUGHT TO CLARIFY PATRIOTIC FRONT'S POSITION ON WHO SHOULD BE IN CHARGE DURING AN INTERIM PERIOD IN RHODESIA. HE APPEARED TO SAY THAT HIS DEMAND THAT THE FRONT BE IN CHARGE WAS A MAXIMUM POSITION SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION DURING FUTURE DISCUSSIONS. HE SAW A ROLE FOR A BRITISH GOVERNOR GENERAL DURING AN INTERIM PERIOD, BUT WANTED DUTIES OF THIS BRITISH OFFICIAL DEFINED. NKOMO ALSO WANTED TO INFORM THE USG OF HIS INTENDED VISIT TO THE U.S. IN AUGUST. WE BELIEVE NKOMO, WITH SOME RELUCTANCE AND PROBABLY NOT IN ENTIRELY GOOD FAITH, IS SEEKING TO CHANGE HIS NEGATIVE IMAGE RE THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE OUT OF CONCERN
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THAT THE U.S. AND BRITAIN MIGHT JUST POSSIBLY GIVE SUPPORT TO AN INTERNAL SOLUTION IN RHODESIA AND OUT OF RESPECT FOR KAUNDA WHO MAY HAVE LEANED ON HIM TO MODIFY HIS STANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. JULY 12 MORNING MEETING WITH NKOMO AT ZAMBIAN PRESIDENTIAL GUEST HOUSE LASTED APPROXIMATELY 40 MINUTES. NKOMO IMMEDIATELY GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS AND BROACHED THREE SUBJECTS,

AID TO REFUGEES, THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE. AND NKOMO'S
UPCOMING TRIP TO THE U.S. CONVERSATION ON REFUGEES WILL BE
REPORTED IN SEPTEL, NKOMO STATEMENTS ON REMAINING TOPICS FOLLOW:

2. ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE: NKOMO SAID THAT FROM WHAT
HE HAS BEEN READING IN PRESS ABOUT HIS TALKS WITH THE CONSULTATIVE
GROUP, HE DOESN'T RECOGNIZE WHAT HE SAID. THIS BOTHERED HIM
BECAUSE WHAT IS SAID OUTSIDE THE TALKS MAY IN THE END CARRY
UNDUE INFLUENCE AND FOR THAT REASON, A CLARIFICATION OF HIS
POSITION WAS IN ORDER. WE TOLD HIM THAT AFTER HIS LAST MEETING
WITH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP, HE HAD GIVEN THE IMPRESSION THAT HE
WASN'T INTERESTED IN FURTHER CONSULTATIONS AND THAT IS WHY
AMBASSADOR LOW WAS INSTRUCTED TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON AFTER
SALISBURY. NKOMO REPLIED THAT FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WERE NOT
NECESSARY; INSTEAD, A MEETING BETWEEN THE "DECISION MAKING
PEOPLE" SUCH AS OWEN WITH HIS EXPERTS AND NKOMO REPRESENTING THE
PATRIOTIC FRONT (PF) WAS NEEDED.

3. WE ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD CLARIFY HIS POSITION TO MAKE
SURE THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING. NKOMO WENT THROUGH HIS
STANDARD ARGUMENTS, EXPLAINING THAT WHAT IS GOING ON IN
ZIMBABWE NOW IS A "WAR SITUATION" WHICH CANNOT BE APPROACHED
ON PURELY POLITICAL GROUNDS UNLIKE OTHER INSTANCES OF
BRITISH DECOLONIZATION IN AFRICA. HE OUTLINED PREVIOUS
ATTEMPTS AT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT AND HIS INVOLVEMENT IN
THEM. ALL WERE FAILURES, INCLUDING KISSINGER INITIATIVE WHICH
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NKOMO HAD TOLD KISSINGER WOULD NOT WORK BUT HE HAD AGREED
TO GO TO GENEVA ANYWAY. NKOMO RECALLED STATING IN GENEVA
THAT IF THE TALKS DID NOT SUCCEED, THE NATIONALISTS WOULD
FIGHT TO THE END. SINCE THAT TIME, THOUSANDS OF YOUNG
PEOPLE HAVE RESPONDED TO HIS CALL.

4. NKOMO SAID THE NEXT STEP SHOULD BE DISCUSSIONS TO REMOVE
THE CAUSES OF WAR AND ON THE STRUCTURE OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT.
THERE WILL BE AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT, BUT WHAT POLITICAL STRUCTURE
WILL BE INSTALLED AT THIS TIME? THE TWO VITAL AND CRUCIAL
QUESTIONS ARE THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT
AND THE LAW AND ORDER STRUCTURE ACCOMPANYING IT. NKOMO SAID HE
WAS WILLING TO DISCUSS THESE QUESTIONS. HE SAID IT IS NATURAL
THAT THE PF WOULD WANT ITS TROOPS IN CHARGE DURING AN INTERIM
PERIOD. THE PF HAD BEEN FIGHTING FOR POWER AND POWER WAS WHAT WHO
CONTROLLED AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WAS ALL ABOUT. HE SAID HE HAS
BOTH GUERRILLAS AND REGULAR TROOPS INCLUDING POLICE AND CUSTOMS
OFFICIALS AT HIS DISPOSAL. WE ASKED HIM IF HE WAS SAYING THAT
DURING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT POLITICAL CONTROL MUST BE DIRECTED
BY HIMSELF AND LAW AND ORDER GUARANTEED BY FORCES UNDER HIMSELF
AS WELL?

NKOMO SAID THIS IS NOT HIS POSITION. HIS IDEA OF A
POLITICAL STRUCTURE FOR THE INTERIM PERIOD AS SUBMITTED
IN GENEVA AND GAVE THE PF A MAJORITY OF SEATS ON A PROPOSED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 1979

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COUNCIL. ON THE LAW AND ORDER SIDE, HE SAID "WE ARE THERE."
IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUERY WHETHER HE WAS TALKING ABOUT COMPLETE
CONTROL, NKOMO SAID, "LET'S DISCUSS IT WITH OWEN AND SEE HOW FAR
WE GO." WE ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR PF FORCES TO BE
UNDER THIRD PARTY COMMAND AND NKOMO SAID HE WAS NOT SURE AND
REPEATED HIS WISH TO DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER. WE THEN NOTED
REFERENCES TO NKOMO'S REJECTION OF A BRITISH GOVERNOR DURING AN
INTERIM OR CARETAKER PERIOD. NKOMO DENIED EVER STATING HIS
PROPOSALS IN NEGATIVE TERMS. HE RECALLED INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT
OF A BRITISH PRESENCE IN RHODESIA AND SAID THE UK REFUSED.
"NOW I UNDERSTAND THEY WANT TO GRAB EVERYTHING." NKOMO SAID HE
HAD GAINED THIS IMPRESSION FROM GRAHAM AND MUSED THAT "THE BULLDOG
WANTS TO GET OUR TEETH TO BITE US." NKOMO THEN SAID THAT THE
AUTHORITY OF A BRITISH GOVERNOR GENERAL SHOULD BE THE SUBJECT
OF DISCUSSIONS WITH DECISION MAKERS AND ADDED THAT THERE MUST BE
A FORMAL MEETING WITH THOSE EMPOWERED TO MAKE DECISIONS.

5. NKOMO SAID HE WANTED TO ASSURE US THAT A CONSTITUTION FOR
AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE WAS A MATTER OF SERIOUS CONCERN AND
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THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT DID NOT TAKE THE DRAFTING OF SUCH A DOCUMENT LIGHTLY. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ACCEPTED THE PRINCIPLES ADVANCED BY THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP: UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS, A BILL OF RIGHTS AND INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY.

6. VISIT TO US: NKOMO IS PLANNING TO VISIT SOUTH AND THEN NORTH AMERICA. HE PLANS TO LEAVE LUSAKA JULY 21 FOR SOUTH AMERICA AND BE IN WASHINGTON FROM AUGUST 8-12 AND WOULD LIKE TO MEET THE SECRETARY, ASST SECY MOOSE, AND AMB YOUNG IF AVAILABLE. WE NOTED THAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE HE WANTS TO MEET MIGHT BE OUT OF TOWN BUT OFFERED OUR ASSISTANCE IN ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS. NKOMO SAID HE WOULD LEAVE THE MATTER IN OUR HANDS.

COMMENT: THERE WAS AN UNREAL QUALITY ABOUT NKOMO'S PRESENTATION. ON THE ONE HAND HE SEEMED TO BE CONFIRMING THAT THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IS INDEED DEMANDING THAT POWER BE TURNED OVER DIRECTLY BY SMITH TO IT. THIS CAME THROUGH CLEARLY IN HIS STATEMENT THAT POWER WAS WHAT THE STRUGGLE WAS ALL ABOUT AND THAT THIS IS THE REASON WHY THE FRONT MUST (AND HE CAME VERY CLOSE TO SAYING SO) CONTROL THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE WAS SAYING THAT THE FRONT WAS PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE STRUCTURE OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND WHERE THE FRONT MIGHT FIT IN. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT BOTH THE FORM OF THE BRITISH PRESENCE AND MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD ARE NEGOTIABLE QUESTIONS. WE SUSPECT THAT NKOMO'S DESIRE TO CLARIFY HIS POSITION IN THE DIRECTION OF BEING MORE ACCOMODATING IS MOTIVATED MORE BY TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAN BY A REAL CHANGE OF HEART. KAUNDA MAY WELL HAVE LEANED ON HIM TO PULL BACK FROM HIS NEGATIVE APPROACH TO THE INITIATIVE (THERE WAS A HINT OF THIS IN KAUNDA'S JULY 8 PRESS CONFERENCE). FURTHER, NKOMO

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MAY HAVE DECIDED THAT IT WAS IN HIS INTEREST NOT TO DISTANCE HIMSELF TOO FAR FROM THE ANGLO-AMERICAN INITIATIVE SINCE THEY JUST MIGHT BACK AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT IF HE TORPEDOED THEIR EFFORT.

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